



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

Hilda Virginia Martin
400 Gloucester Street
Hampton VA 23661

COPY MAILED

APR 27 2007

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Martin et al. :
Application No.: 10/608954 : DECISION ON
Filing or 371(c) Date: 06/30/2003 : PETITION
Title of Invention: :
CHAIRBACK BIBLE/BOOK HOLDER :

This is a decision in response to the correspondence framed as a grievance report, filed May 9, 2006. The correspondence is properly treated as a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment under 37 CFR 1.181. The delay in treating this petition is regretted.

This Petition is hereby **dismissed**.

Any further petition must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under [insert the applicable code section]." This is **not** final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

Background

The above-identified application became abandoned for failure to timely and properly reply to the non-final Office action, mailed June 14, 2005. The Office action set a three (3) month period for reply. Extensions of time were available under 37 CFR 1.136(a). No reply having been received, the application became abandoned September 15, 2005. A Notice of Abandonment was mailed January 26, 2006.

The present petition

Applicant files the present petition and provides that the reply failed to include the correct application number. No copy of the reply has been filed.

Applicable Law, Rules and MPEP

The MPEP, 711.03(c), Petition To Withdraw Holding of Abandonment Based on Evidence That a Reply Was Timely Mailed or Filed, states:

37 CFR 1.10(c) through 1.10(e) and 1.10(g) set forth procedures for petitioning the Director of the USPTO to accord a filing date to correspondence as of the date of deposit of the correspondence as "Express Mail." A petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment relying upon a timely reply placed in "Express Mail" must include an appropriate petition under 37 CFR 1.10(c), (d), (e), or (g) (see MPEP § 513). When a paper is shown to have been mailed to the Office using the "Express Mail" procedures, the paper must be entered in PALM with the "Express Mail" date.

Similarly, applicants may establish that a reply was filed with a postcard receipt that properly identifies the reply and provides prima facie evidence that the reply was timely filed. See MPEP § 503. For example, if the application has been held abandoned for failure to file a reply to a first Office action, and applicant has a postcard receipt showing that an amendment was timely filed in response to the Office action, then the holding of abandonment should be withdrawn upon the filing of a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment. When the reply is shown to have been timely filed based on a postcard receipt, the reply must be entered into PALM using the date of receipt of the reply as shown on the post card receipt.

Where a certificate of mailing under 37 CFR 1.8, but not a postcard receipt, is relied upon in a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment, see 37 CFR 1.8(b) and MPEP § 512. As stated in 37 CFR 1.8(b)(3) the statement that attests to the previous timely mailing or transmission of the correspondence must be on a personal knowledge basis, or to the satisfaction of the Director of the USPTO. If the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing is not made by the person who signed the Certificate of Mailing (i.e., there is no personal knowledge basis), then the statement attesting to the previous timely mailing should include evidence that supports the conclusion that the correspondence was actually mailed (e.g., copies of a mailing log establishing that correspondence was mailed for that application). When the correspondence is shown to have been timely filed based on a certificate of mailing, the correspondence is entered into PALM with the actual date of receipt (i.e., the date that the duplicate copy of the papers was filed with the statement under 37 CFR 1.8).

37 CFR 1.8(b) also permits applicant to notify the Office of a previous mailing or transmission of correspondence and submit a statement under 37 CFR 1.8(b)(3) accompanied by a duplicate copy of the correspondence when a reasonable amount of time (e.g., more than one month) has elapsed from the time of mailing or transmitting of the correspondence. Applicant does not have to wait until the application becomes abandoned before notifying the Office of the previous mailing or transmission of the correspondence. Applicant should check the private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system for the status of the correspondence before notifying the Office. See MPEP § 512.

Analysis

Applicant has failed to demonstrate compliance with 37 CFR 1.10 (filing of the correspondence by Express Mail), or 37 CFR 1.8 (filing of correspondence using the certificate of mail procedures). As such, Applicant has failed to demonstrate that a reply to the Office action was timely filed.

Applicant asserts that a timely reply was filed but included an incorrect serial number. Applicant is advised that minor errors in the identification of papers filed in this Office may be excused, provided the papers included other sufficient identifiers that would allow this Office to quickly identify the application file to which the papers were intended to be filed. The MPEP 502 states:

All correspondence related to a national patent application already filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office must include the identification of the application number or the serial number and the filing date assigned to the application by the Office. Any correspondence not containing the proper identification set forth in 37 CFR 1.5(a) will be returned to the sender by OIPE. Each paper should be inspected to assure that the papers being returned contain either an "Office Date" stamp or a TC date stamp. A minor error in the identification of the application can be corrected by the Office provided the correct identification can be quickly discovered. Examples of minor errors are transposed numbers, typographical errors, and listing the parent application number. The failure to give any application number is not a minor error. The Office often experiences difficulty in matching incoming papers with the application file to which they pertain because insufficient or erroneous information is given. This applies especially to amendments, powers of attorney, changes of address, status letters, petitions for extension of time, and other petitions.

The petition is dismissed without prejudice. Applicant should file a "Request for Reconsideration of Petition" and include a copy of the correspondence that was filed in response to the June 14, 2005 office action.

If Applicant is unable to demonstrate compliance with the rules, an alternate avenue of relief is available.

Alternate Venue

Public Law 97-247, § 3, 96 Stat. 317 (1982), which revised patent and trademark fees, amended 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) to provide for the revival of an "unintentionally" abandoned application without a showing that the delay in was "unavoidable." An "unintentional" petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by the required fee, currently \$750.00 for a small entity¹.

The filing of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore must be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay can not make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

¹ Applicant is further advised that a grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) requires, in addition to the petition and petition fee, the required reply, to wit, an acceptable appeal brief; a continuing application; a Request for Continued Examination ("RCE"), or a reply that places the application in condition for allowance.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Commissioner for Patents
 PO Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (571) 273-8300
 Attn: Office of Petitions

By hand: Customer Service Window
 Randolph Building
 401 Dulany Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3232.


Derek L. Woods

Attorney
Office of Petitions